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EVALUATION OF UNCTAD EMPRETEC PROGRAMME

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Executive Summary

UNCTAD EMPRETEC is a programme that provides developing countries with training in entrepreneurship. Its activities involve the delivery of motivational and technical seminars, the provision of advisory services and the development of national and international networks serving the needs of entrepreneurs. The programme was initiated in the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) in New York in 1988, and was gradually transferred to UNCTAD, with the responsibility being located definitively in Geneva only since 1998. As of December 1999, the programme is fully active in twelve countries, with preliminary activities being initiated in seven other countries. Although the EMPRETEC concept is still appropriate, the training component of the programme needs adaptations. Over the years, the leading role the programme enjoyed at the time of its launching has not evolved favourably with the introduction of new competitors. Nevertheless, there does not appear to be any full substitute to EMPRETEC. The programme still possesses a large international network, and benefits from the favourable perception of UNCTAD in developing countries. According to the data available, it would appear that the cost of "producing" an Empreteco is rather modest. As of December 1999, only a few of the national programmes were close to being financially sustainable. The report provides a number of recommendations with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the programme. They fall under two broad strategic areas: substantive and operational sustainability, and international networking. They involve a shift in focus for UNCTAD EMPRETEC. They should be given priority in order to consolidate the programme as an essential step towards a more efficient delivery of its activities.

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Appendix I – Terms of reference

Appendix II - Methodology

I- Introduction

1. EMPRETEC was established in 1988 to promote entrepreneurship among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries The programme is meant to identify promising entrepreneurs, to provide them with training aimed at developing their entrepreneurial traits and their understanding of basic business procedures, to give them access to appropriate advisory services, and to link them with trade partners nationally as well as internationally. The programme emphasises the building of active networking between public institutions, private business associations and multilateral organizations as well as between national EMPRETEC programmes and other programmes promoting entrepreneurship at a regional level.

2. The EMPRETEC concept draws on several other experiences (India's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDI), Bocconi University's Gemini Programme, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's programme (USA), and more importantly from USAID-supported research on personal entrepreneurial characteristics conducted by MSI (Management Systems International, Washington, D.C.).[1]

3. The programme went through three phases. From 1988 to 1994, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) in New York ran the programme. Officially, the programme was transferred to UNCTAD Geneva in 1994. But in effect there were two EMPRETEC teams in operation after 1994 and until 1998,[2] one in New York and one in Geneva. In fact, one staff member appears to have been working on EMPRETEC in New York until 1998. It could be claimed however that since 1996 the responsibility for the management of the programme has been progressively more firmly located in Geneva, and is definitively so since 1998.

Purpose, scope, and methodology of the evaluation

4. The terms of reference state that the evaluation is to be comprehensive, and to cover the programme since its inception in 1988. It will include an examination of the concept and design of the programme, its implementation, its comparative advantage, the relationships between this programme and other relevant programmes, the results obtained and its impact. Lessons are to be drawn, and recommendations made on the strategy and priorities of the programme. The extent to which the funds provided are adequately used is to be assessed. The gender dimension must be taken into account whenever possible.[3]

5. The evaluation team is composed of a professional evaluator and of two government representatives, one from the donor and another from the beneficiary community both acting in a personal capacity.

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[1] United Nations, Economic and Social Council. Experience gained in technical cooperation activities relating to foreign direct investment and transnational corporations – Entrepreneurship and enterprise development, Report by the UNCTAD secretariat (E/C.10/1994/9).

[2] Ten years of EMPRETEC: Report on the meeting of EMPRETEC directors, leading Empretecos and heads of EMPRETEC associations, UNCTAD secretariat, Geneva, circa December 1997, p. 1.

[3] The detailed terms of reference are presented in Appendix 1.

6. The methodology adopted by the evaluation team is described in Appendix 2. It involved the production of a logical analysis framework, visits to five national programmes, and extensive consultations with all parties concerned.

7. Sample coverage either through field missions or surveys reaches 84 per cent of all funding received by national programmes and 76 per cent of all Empretecos trained.

II- Review of EMPRETEC activities

1. Geographical coverage

8. EMPRETEC activities started in 1988 in Argentina where the names Empretec and Empretecos, which are now used worldwide, were coined, from the contraction of two Spanish words "emprendedores" (entrepreneurs) and "tecnología" (technology). Since then, the programme has been launched in twelve other countries.[4] The term Empretecos has remained even if the focus on technology has not been adopted in other countries.

9. As of December 1999, the programme is still active in twelve of the thirteen countries where it was initiated since its inception in 1988. It should be noted that no national programme was launched between 1992 and 1996. Although a number of programmes were prepared in Asia, none had been implemented as of December 1999.

10. In addition to these thirteen countries, according to UNCTAD, EMPRETEC projects have been launched with preliminary activities in seven countries, and initiated without activities in seven others. In addition, requests have been received, and are at various stages of preparation, for more than 20 countries. EMPRETEC is also involved in other regional initiatives such as Enterprise Africa and Med 2000.

2. Funding of national programmes

11. Over the years, the EMPRETEC programme has received support from many multilateral and bilateral assistance programmes as well as from local government agencies promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs.[5] In spite of the generous assistance given by UNCTAD EMPRETEC to the evaluation team, it has not been possible to draw up a complete account of all the financial contributions made to the programme. It appears that many of the records were not transferred from New York in 1994 (or afterwards) when the management of the programme was relocated to Geneva.

12. On the basis of the responses to the questionnaire sent to national programmes and from secondary sources available in Geneva, it is estimated that the programme received at least US$ 35.3 million (in 1999 dollars) between 1989 and 1999 from local governments, and from bilateral and multilateral donors).[6]

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[4] Uruguay 1989, Nigeria 1989, Ghana 1990, Chile 1990, Brazil 1991, Venezuela 1992, Zimbabwe 1992, Colombia 1996, Botswana 1997, Morocco 1998, Ethiopia 1999, Russian Federation 1999. (Source: EMPRETEC – The First Ten Years (UNCTAD/ITE/EDS/Misc.17), Geneva, 1999)

[5] EMPRETEC – The First Ten Years, United Nations, Geneva, 1999, p. 43.

[6] Data are missing for three national programmes.

3. Staffing and funding of the programme at headquarters

13. From 1988 to 1994, the EMPRETEC staff in New York was composed exclusively of extrabudgetary positions and of consultants. The total number of staff fluctuated from two in 1988 to four in 1994 with a high of six from 1991 to 1993. Apparently, one position was also kept in New York from 1995 to 1998 in spite of the fact that the programme had been relocated to Geneva in 1994.

14. Total staff in Geneva started from a low full-time equivalent of .75 in 1994, and reached a full-time equivalent of 6.5 persons in 1999 (2.5 on the regular budget, 2 extrabudgetary positions and 2 GS).

4. Activities undertaken by national EMPRETEC programmes

15. Activities fall under four headings: training events; training packages developed; advisory packages developed; networking activities.

16. **Training events.** Two types of training event took place: basic motivational seminars (Entrepreneurial Development Programme, EDP, as well as its version for the public sector); and specialized seminars offered to Empretecos after they attended the EDP seminar.

17. **EDP.** These seminars are the backbone of the EMPRETEC concept. Indeed, a true Empreteco may be defined essentially as an individual

1) who demonstrates significant entrepreneurial abilities and a strong success potential;
2) who is selected after a formal and rigorous selection process, and
3) who has attended an EDP seminar.

18. Such Empretecos may then attend specialized seminars on various aspects of management principles, access advisory services offered by national EMPRETEC programmes, and participate in several networking activities. But EDP remains the gate to the Empretecos world, and as a result, all national programmes run EDP seminars every year or even several times a year according to local demand.

19. The number of EDP seminars varies from one country to the next but it usually increases over the life of national programmes. Yet, great disparities may be observed between one country and another often because of country size. In 1999 for instance, one large country reported 285 seminars whereas another reported only two seminars.

20. The same basic EDP package is used worldwide. Two types of adaptation took place over the years: "localisation" and structural changes. Localisation refers to changes made in the programmes in order to conform to cultural specificities such as choice of local examples, characters, and situations when typically foreign stereotypes are at odds with local conditions. Structural changes refer to in-depth alterations that require shortening or eliminating part of the original package or else adding new elements to it.

21. **Localisation** has taken place in all countries, and structural changes have occurred in most of the countries surveyed. For instance, the length of the programme has been changed from the original ten days to seven or even less in some countries. Time allotted to the

coverage of some topics has been shortened in some countries. This has been more particularly the case with regard to the business planning section of the EDP. Other topics have been introduced by trainers according to perceived local needs.

22. **Specialised training.** In all countries surveyed, specialised training seminars are developed according to demand. The most frequently specialised training seminar offered is on business plan development. Other seminars cover such topics as quality management, bookkeeping, financial management and marketing management. These programmes may be developed in-house but there is a clear tendency to rely on outside specialists as needed. Since these seminars are offered only when there is sufficient demand, their number varies greatly from one country to the next and from year to year. In 1999 for instance, the number of specialized seminars offered ranged from two to 56.

23. Since the development of specialised training packages derives from national demand for specialised training, production of such packages varies from one country to another and from year to year. Data gathered during the field missions and from secondary sources indicate that in 1999 two to nine packages per country were developed. Since these programmes are often offered by or in collaboration with external suppliers, it cannot be claimed in a number of instances that they have truly been developed by the national programmes themselves.

24. **Advisory services.** Much of what has been stated above about specialised training can also be said about advisory services. Field investigation revealed that in 1999 the number of group advisory services developed/offered on a national basis ranged from two to nine except in one exceptional case where no advisory package has ever been developed since the inception of the programme. In that country, it was decided to provide all Empretecos with a full range of individualised services following a case-by-case need analysis and through referral to external advisory suppliers.

25. **Networking activities.** The EMPRETEC concept emphasises the development of linkages 1) between Empretecos, 2) between Empretecos and large national firms and/or TNCs, 3) between Empretecos and lending institutions. Other linkages have been launched internationally between Empretecos, EMPRETEC trainers and directors of national programmes.

26. Most country programmes are characterized by frequent networking activities among Empretecos and between Empretecos and other firms. National programmes promote such exchanges through a variety of events such as business forums, conferences, business breakfasts, the delivery of business awards as well as direct referral. However, since records on such activities are seldom kept, it is rarely possible to quantify these exchanges.

27. In this area, the evaluation team chose to focus on the tangible outcome of some of the activities concerned such as the number of contracts signed and loans obtained by Empretec firms. Out of seven countries surveyed (either through a questionnaire and/or field mission) that had been engaged in such activities for a sufficient length of time, four were unable to provide the requested information.

28. The remaining three provided vastly different answers. Over the last three years (1997 to 1999), the number of contracts signed between Empretec firms and foreign firms per 100 Empretecos and per annum ranged between 0.7 and 2.8, while the number of contracts signed

between Empretec firms and national government procurement agencies amounted to 2.0 and 4.0 (data available for only two countries), the number of contracts signed between national Empretec firms ranged between 0.5 and 3.0 and the number of contracts between Empretec and non-Empretec nationals varied between 1.3 and 1.7 (data for two countries only). The number of loans granted by financial institutions to Empretec firms ranged over the same period between 8.5 and 23 per 100 Empretecos and per annum (data for two countries only).

5. Number of Empretecos produced by the programme

29. This section deals with the number of entrepreneurs trained, the number of entrepreneurs advised and the number of networking entrepreneurs. Meaningful figures can be drawn only from country programmes that have been in existence for a long enough time. In this section, all country programmes taken into account have been active for at least seven years.

30. **Number of entrepreneurs trained.** Statistics have been provided by UNCTAD on a number of occasions, and the latest to be published are presented in the booklet, entitled *Empretec - The First Ten Years* (December 1999). They do not always concur, as they are based on secondary accounts. Under these conditions, the evaluation team felt it would be sensible to arrive at its own estimates.

31. The number of entrepreneurs trained since the inception of the programme for four countries on which the evaluation team has been able to obtain data is 5 090 according to UNCTAD. The number obtained by the team is 4 700. That is 8 per cent less than the UNCTAD figure.

32. It should be observed that the estimate produced by the evaluation team includes individuals that may have been accepted in the EDP without going through the usual formal selection process. On the basis of the information gathered during the field mission, it appears that on average about 10 per cent of the EDP participants have been admitted into the programme without going through such a process. It should be taken into account that the proportion of such participants is on the increase in several countries.

33. **Number of entrepreneurs advised.** Three countries provided adequate data on this issue. On average, the number of Empretecos that benefited from advisory services ranges, on average, between 12.6 and 25.6 per 100 Empretecos per annum over the 1997-1999 period. Advisory services have been provided in many countries through group counselling rather than on a one-to-one basis.

34. **Number of networking Empretecos.** All country programmes keep a listing of participants in their training activities and in particular in EDP. In most of the cases that were investigated in the field, it appears that these listings are not regularly updated. After some probing, it turned out that the proportion of Empretecos involved on a regular basis in various networking activities such as participation in national or international EMPRETEC events is only a fraction of the total number of Empretecos. It ranges from the exceptionally high figure of 42 per cent to a more likely low of 10 per cent of all Empretecos produced by national programmes since their inception. Except for a core of very active members, most Empretecos still in business tend to stay aloof without giving any news of their activities.

35. **Gender.** Female representation ranges between 10 to 30 per cent of Empretecos. The ratio tends to be somewhat higher in Africa than in Latin America.

6. Increase in entrepreneurial activities

36. The overall objectives of the EMPRETEC programme are to increase entrepreneurial capacity at the national level, either in all or only in specific sectors (depending on the targeting strategy adopted by national the programme concerned) as well as in exporting. Performance indicators used in order to assess whether these objectives have been met are: number of new small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); increase in total sales; number of new exporting SMEs; increase in export volume.

37. Satisfactory data have been collected for five countries. One country, however, provided only part of the requested information. It should be stressed that, except in one case, the data provided by national programmes is based on the judgement of the respondents rather than on tangible records.

38. Except for survival rate estimates, no comparable data have been located that would allow for any meaningful benchmarking exercise.

39. **Creation of new SMEs**. Most entrepreneurs already ran their own business before joining the EMPRETEC programmes. For those that did not, it is estimated that within three years of attending the programme, the proportion of Empretecos who started new businesses ranged between 9 and 33 per cent in the five countries for which data were available.

40. **Increase in number of employees**. This is estimated (in four countries) to range between 5 and 25 per cent (for businesses already in operation before the entrepreneurs attended the EMPRETEC programme). Although this indicator may be useful as far as employment policy is concerned, it is not a reliable performance criterion at the firm level. More appropriate criteria from a management point of view are increases in domestic and/or export sales and profitability.

41. **Increase in sales.** After three years, Empretecos already in business prior to attending the programme increased their sales by 10 to 80 per cent. Strong variations are observed between countries. African countries report significantly higher sales increases than Latin American countries.

42. **Increase in export sales.** After three years, Empretecos already in business prior to attending the programme reported increases ranging between 15 and 100 per cent. The rate is significantly higher in countries that have adopted an export expansion objective. Not all responding countries have adopted such a strategy.

43. **Survival rate.** The effectiveness of a BDS is reflected by the survival rate of the firms that benefited from it. In general, survival rates for SMEs are notoriously low not only in developing countries but also in industrial countries where they are seldom higher than 70 per cent after three years of operation in new businesses. The data collected provide estimates for new businesses and for businesses already in operation prior to attending the EMPRETEC programme. Survival rates reported for new businesses differ widely from one country to the other and range between 30 and 85 per cent. For businesses in existence prior to attending the EMPRETEC programme, the rates are higher and range between 70 and 92 per cent.

III - Evaluation of the programme

1. Programme concept and design

44. As stated in the introduction, EMPRETEC is meant to promote entrepreneurship through the delivery of a training programme, the provision of advisory services and the establishment of various networks supporting SMEs.

45. **Training.** It is clear that the motivational training programme (EDP) has met with considerable enthusiasm in all countries. Participants' evaluations are always very high, and comments are extremely positive. Yet detractors external to the programmes often claim that the programme is too soft, and does not provide the technical skills required to successfully run an SME.

46. A distinction has to be made between EDP and other technical seminars such as bookkeeping or quality management. With regard to technical training, criticism is often legitimate. When national programmes have not proposed such training, and firmly induced Empretecos to attend them, Empretecos have not acquired the necessary technical skills except through a costly process of trial and error.

47. It has indeed been observed in the course of the field mission that in a number of countries such technical training was limited, and that Empretecos did not indeed receive sufficient preparation in this area. In most cases, this was not because the need was unrecognized but rather because resources were lacking for developing and subsidizing such programmes – as technical training is often requested by Empretecos.

48. **Advisory services.** To a large extent, advisory services were offered as an individual response to a shortage of technical training seminars. This was, of course, rather a costly alternative to meeting the needs of Empretecos. Business plan preparation is the most obvious case in point. When such basic technical training was not provided, Empretecos had to be individually and less cost-effectively coached, or left unable to promote their business interest successfully, in particular when approaching lending institutions.

49. **Networking.** The networking objective met with a variable degree of success depending on the specific nature of the networking objectives pursued. Empretecos have usually joined forces in most countries, sharing experiences and business tips, and participating in a variety of EMPRETEC activities. Yet EMPRETEC associations have not flourished everywhere, and national programmes have not always been successful in nurturing them.

50. When the national objective has been to develop closer relationships between entrepreneurs and government, the record has been fairly good. However, it should be stressed that this has not always been a national objective.

51. In general, the development of business relationships between Empretecos and TNCs has been an objective almost impossible to achieve.

52. It may be wondered whether the EMPRETEC concept is still appropriate; but the evaluation team feels that this is certainly the case. The EMPRETEC formula (motivational

training plus technical training plus advisory support plus networking) remains an appropriate one. However, certain conditions have to be met in the future and these will be spelled out in the section IV of this report dealing with recommendations.

2. Adaptability to changing needs

53. The record shows that over the years and under quite diverse conditions the programme has been able to survive and move forward in most countries. It has indeed proved to be adaptable to changing needs in both time and space. What is intriguing is that it has been adaptable "by default" and thanks to the efforts of national programmes, since for many years countries were left practically without any guidance from EMPRETEC headquarters as a result of the confusion and friction over the transfer of the management of the programme from New York to Geneva.

54. There is evidence, however, that the training component of the programme has aged and needs to be adapted. The most obvious adaptation required concerns the motivational seminar. National programmes would wish to see the EDP modernised, and to be able to use a new "improved" version of this seminar. Themes covering new issues are requested in all the countries that were visited by the evaluation team members. The same can be said, though to a lesser extent, about technical training and advisory activities. Some countries experience difficulties in identifying news training/advisory needs, in training their own trainers or in accessing external trainers.

3. Implementation of the programme

55. To what extent UNCTAD contributed to the success of national programmes is ambiguous. The pioneering of EMPRETEC was not done by UNCTAD but by the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) in New York in the late 1980s. UNCTC managed to accomplish a remarkable expansion of the programme over a four-year period, between 1988 and 1992. The present "success stories" described in EMPRETEC publications were initiated in this period. UNCTC was dismantled in 1992, and part of its functions transferred to UNCTAD in Geneva where one of the senior EMPRETEC officials was also transferred. But the lack of a clear mandate from United Nations top management as to where EMPRETEC should be located caused considerable confusion and a duplication of EMPRETEC programmes that lasted at least four years (1992-1996). In fact, it might be argued that EMPRETEC was not fully transferred to Geneva until 1998.[7]

56. This resulted in a severe drop in programme effectiveness during all those years. No new national programme was launched between 1992 and 1996, and existing programmes were left with little backing from EMPRETEC headquarters. Institutional contact was lost with most national programmes. The relocation from New York to Geneva was notoriously difficult, the integration of the EMPRETEC programme within the UNCTAD structure appeared to have been anything but smooth, and funding was hard to get. As a result, UNCTAD EMPRETEC was unable for years to see to the upgrading of the programme, or to the expansion of the support services to Empretecos, and was also unable to respond adequately and in a systematic manner to requests from the field.

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[7] This state of affairs is acknowledged in an internal report produced in December 1997: Ten Years of EMPRETEC – Report on the Meeting of EMPRETEC directors, leading Empretecos and heads of EMPRETEC associations, UNCTAD secretariat, Geneva, circa December 1999, p. 1.

57. Other shortcomings of the programme may also be imputed, at least in part, to this lack of sustained support from UNCTAD EMPRETEC. In addition to insufficient follow-up in the implementation of the national programmes, the field mission has revealed that training of trainers has been insufficiently supervised. In a number of countries, the number of trainers is now dangerously low. Inbreeding may ultimately lead to lower quality training. Moreover, UNCTAD EMPRETEC Geneva has made only limited investments in R&D, whether directly or indirectly. As a result, UNCTAD EMPRETEC has been unable to transfer new knowledge to national programmes. Finally, the cross-fertilization potential from one part of the world to another or from one country to another within regions has been limited to too few cases. Annual meetings of EMPRETEC stakeholders have been taking place since 1997. This initiative has been well received from national programmes. They continue to request more opportunities for international networking, and expect more concrete follow-up actions in the future than in the past as a result of those meetings.

4. Comparative advantage of the programme

58. At the time of its launching, the programme had a clear lead advantage. The concept was both comprehensive and innovative, and the test of time proved that altogether it was quite effective. Since then, various BDS (Business Development Services) initiatives have sprung up promoted either by bilateral or multilateral agencies.

59. Although there does not appear to be any full substitute to EMPRETEC, alternatives have emerged since its inception. Competition has increased considerably regarding the training component of EMPRETEC. Universities have developed entrepreneurship programmes in industrialized as well as in developing countries. In addition, consulting firms have entered the field. Notably, former EMPRETEC trainers have offered cloned programmes in direct competition to EMPRETEC. Consequently, the comparative advantage of EMPRETEC has not evolved favourably over time.

60. Yet there is still plenty of need for EMPRETEC as demand for such a service has also considerably expanded over time. The numerous leads for new projects that UNCTAD EMPRETEC is presently considering provide evidence to support this claim. In addition, EMPRETEC benefits from a large international network that could be much better attended to than it is at present. This network constitutes a major asset for EMPRETEC - perhaps its most distinctive one.

61. Forming part of the UN family is also an advantage to the programme. It gives EMPRETEC a patina of credibility that other non-UN BDS programmes do not offer.

5. Relationships between EMPRETEC and other organizations/initiatives

62. EMPTRETEC has entertained relationships most notably with ILO, ITC and regional programmes such as Enterprise Africa and Med 2000.

63. ITC has traditionally offered services in trade promotion and more recently in the upgrading of general managerial skills through its Global Competitiveness Programme. ITC may therefore be regarded as offering complementary services (e.g. export promotion) and partly competing services (e.g. competitiveness training). Although, it there is considerable

potential for cooperation it would appear that it has been exploited only to a limited extent so far.

64. UNDP has contributed to support EMPRETEC over the years. In addition, it has used UNCTAD expertise in this field in implementing regional projects such as Enterprise Africa. UNDP is also involved in other activities concerning small enterprises. However, they are different from what is offered by EMPRETEC.

65. Regional programmes offer considerable potential for cooperation in the future. A case in point is MED 2000 which regroups under a common umbrella both EMPRETEC and ITC as well as other programmes such as ISO. This programme is able to offer a broad portfolio of services to developing countries as well as the possibility of designing programmes to fit their needs.

66. Regional programmes present advantages for UNCTAD EMPRETEC. Close to the field, they are in a better position than UNCTAD EMPRETEC to identify national needs, as well as to offer services complementing the offer of national EMPRETEC programmes. They also present the advantage of being adept at spotting national competencies that may be tapped and used in other countries within the region. As an example, Enterprise Africa has designed a sectoral export promotion programme to be implemented within several African countries, and trainers have been active in other countries than their own. The Central American programme is implemented in three countries, thanks to a grant from IDB that went directly to the countries. They in turn, contracted with EMPRETEC Uruguay. UNCTAD intervention concentrates on quality control and the property rights of the programme.

6. Relationships with donors and beneficiaries

67. Meetings took place with representatives of donor and beneficiary country missions in Geneva. It was obvious that the institutional memory regarding EMPRETEC was often lacking. However, in the case of two missions of beneficiary countries presently in contact with UNCTAD EMPRETEC clearly acknowledged the relevance of the programme and showed considerable interest in its activities. One donor country has expressed its appreciation of the programme, while another has stated its dissatisfaction over the management of its contribution.

7. Success factors

68. A number of factors are usually referred to in connection with the degree of success of BDS (Business Development Services). They include macroeconomic and political conditions, managerial considerations, distinctive advantages, and resources provided.

69. A number of factors have facilitated or impeded the achievement of EMPRETEC objectives. Certainly, favourable country conditions such as government interest in promoting entrepreneurship and SMES did play a role, and such a basic prerequisite was not satisfied in at least three countries. This could point to an inadequate assessment of local access conditions. General macroeconomic conditions may occasionally have hampered the launching of EMPRETEC programmes. But it is felt that the factors that have most contributed to the success of some national programmes were the entrepreneurship, competence, and networking asset of the national programme directors and of the board of trustees as well as the competence of the managing teams.

70. Two other factors played a considerable role: the abundance of financial resources and/or the tutelage of private sector institutions such as professional associations and financial institutions. These supporting partners played a considerable role in sustaining the programmes in hard times, most notably when they were under financial stress.

71. In general, it is felt that the programmes that were most successful are also the programmes that received the largest financial support, from national as well as from international sources. Although a causal link may not be established, the association between the size of the financial support received and the degree of success is undeniable.

8. Cost-effectiveness

72. Cost-effectiveness refers to the ability of national programmes to provide quality services at as low a cost as possible. Cost itself is not defined in a unique way in BDS (Business Development Services) studies dealing with this issue. In some studies cost refers only to direct variable costs whereas it would be more appropriate to look at total cost over the life of a project. In addition, cost-effectiveness analyses are likely to be short on meaningfulness unless they involve some degree of benchmarking, and unless they somehow relate to the social gains resulting from the programme. Since the national programmes analysed in this evaluation have taken place over more than seven years it is possible to draw some full cost estimates, and even to take into account headquarters expenses.

73. It is possible to estimate the full cost of training an Empreteco at the national programme level on the basis of the data gathered through the questionnaire and during the fieldwork. Except for one outlier, the cost ranges between a low of $ 800 to a high of $ 2 700 (in 1999 dollars). The data also indicate that the cost of training an Empreteco is higher in Africa than in Latin America.

74. These figures provide a very rough estimate of the full cost of training an Empreteco. This cost depends heavily on the degree to which the programme is individualized and on the range of services provided. For instance, one country that has shown the lowest total cost per Empreteco, has also offered the most limited range of services to trainees that was observable in the course of this evaluation. In another country which has adopted a mass training approach, cost reaches the rather low level of $ 900 (in 1999 dollars).

75. It should be kept in mind that these figures still do not take into account all the costs involved in training Empretecos. For one thing, it does not include the fees for services paid by the Empretecos themselves.

76. If one were to add the EMPRETEC headquarters cost of training Empretecos - which is not usually done in BDS cost-effectiveness studies - the figures quoted above would have to be increased accordingly.

77. **Benchmarking.** UNCTAD has recently produced an analysis of the operations of EMPRETEC Colombia.[8] According to the cost estimates presented in this paper, the direct

[8] Increasing the Financial Viability of the EMPRETEC Programme – The Case of Colombia. Paper presented at the International Conference on Business Development Services, Hanoi, Vietnam, 3-6 April 2000.

variable operating cost per Empreteco has been 823 $ on average over a two-year period (1998-1999). Operating cost estimates do not take into account fees paid by Empretecos.[9]

78. The data reveals that the cost of training an Empreteco declines over time. Start-up costs need to be absorbed, and time allows for reaching economies of scale. In the Colombian case, operational cost dropped considerably from the first to the second year due to the fact that local trainers replaced external consultants.

79. If one were to take into account the fixed costs, which may be estimated from the preliminary project document, the full-cost equivalent per Empreteco would increase by a factor of 2.5. This would indicate that the cost estimates produced in the course of this evaluation are comparable to those produced by UNCTAD for Colombia, with the exception of one country.

80. Comparable data on non-EMPRETEC programmes are hard to come by. Few BDS provide detailed information relating to cost-effectiveness, "not least because there is not yet any agreed methodology for measuring it across projects".[10] ILO gives some estimates for several BDS in Africa.[11] They fall in the range of $ 340 - $ 760 but, should not be compared with the estimates for EMPRETEC since they do not take fixed costs into account.

81. As mentioned earlier, a proper appreciation of cost per trained Empreteco cannot be made meaningful without considering the benefits resulting from such training in the recipient countries. When one takes into account the benefits from increased entrepreneurial activities resulting from EMPRETEC listed previously in this report (i.e. the increase in number of employees, in sales, in export sales), it would appear that the cost of "producing" an entrepreneur is rather modest (except in the case of one country). Yet only a thorough cost-benefit analysis would provide a definite answer to this question. Such an analysis is of course beyond the realm of this evaluation.

9. Sustainability

82. Sustainability is a term that may take several meanings. In particular, it may refer to financial, substantive, operational and, in the case of EMPRETEC to networking sustainability. Financial sustainability is most commonly referred to, and lends itself to various definitions. According to UNCTAD EMPRETEC, it means the ability of programmes to generate enough income, and to be able to meet all their financial needs. Substantive sustainability implies the ability to conduct the functions a programme is intended to perform without external technical assistance. Operational sustainability refers to the ability to assume required administrative tasks effectively. Networking sustainability refers to the survival potential of networks between Empretecos and other targeted parties.

83. **Financial sustainability.** According to UNCTAD EMPRETEC, national programmes become sustainable rather quickly: "After a consolidation period of three to five years, ... the cost of running the programme can be covered by participants' fees and contracts with major clients".[12] Historical data show that the national programmes that were analysed did not

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[9] Op. cit. , pp. 9-10.
[10] "Business Development Services – How sustainable they can really be?" by Jim Tanburn, International Small Enterprise Programme, ILO, undated, circa 1999, p. 55.
[11] Op. cit. p. 55.
[12] EMPRETEC – The First Ten Years, op. cit. pp 34-5.

proceed according to this scenario. Even after receiving donor contributions largely in excess of the amounts quoted by UNCTAD EMPRETEC as being necessary for reaching financial sustainability - some $ 1.2 million over an eight-year period - some programmes were still unable to fend for themselves.

84. As of December 1999, only a few of the national programmes that were investigated were close to being financially sustainable. Four programmes did show a surplus in 1999. But in at least three cases it was the result of a temporary excess of revenues against activities that had not yet been completed. If these programmes have survived it is because local governments and private institutions have kept on supporting them as well as bilateral or multilateral donors.

85. The reasons for this low level of financial self-sustainability relate to various national conditions. One of the most common reasons advanced is that client SMEs have difficulty in paying market-rate fees for services requested and received. This is particularly true for the EDP seminar that is often offered at subsidised rates.

86. Another reason is that fixed expenditures are often quite high. The ratio of administrative to total full-time staff that was recorded by the evaluation team ranges from 50 per cent to 67 per cent in five cases. Only in one case did the ratio fall to a low 21 per cent. This ratio is usually higher in Africa than in Latin America.

87. The ratio of overhead expenditures to the total budget was also computed for five countries. This ratio gives an indication of the ability of a programme to cover its fixed expenses, and indirectly of its financial sustainability. Except for a low of 20 per cent, the ratio fluctuates between 48 per cent and 70 per cent. These figures are too high to support the view that programmes reached financial sustainability after a few years of operation.

88. **Substantive sustainability.** National programmes can fulfil their mission only if they manage to rejuvenate their programmes periodically, and adapt their offering to evolving demand conditions. To a large extent, this depends on the number of trained personnel and the periodic upgrading of such staff, most notably with regard to training. The data collected indicate that out of six countries surveyed three are dangerously vulnerable. Only a few full-time or part-time trainers have remained available after several years of services. Many trainers that up to 1993 were trained by MSI (Management Systems International) have since dropped out.

89. Training of trainers took place in all countries. In most cases, local trainers who had been previously trained by MIS, and who had received from MIS some sort of informal trainer's certification, provided such training. This process is likely to have resulted in some inbreeding. It should be noted, however, that EDP participants usually fail to distinguish between trainers that were trained by MSI, and those that were trained by local trainers.

90. Upgrading of training skills remains largely an individual concern. It is up to the trainers to see that they keep abreast of all the changes that take place, and affect the many diverse dimensions of entrepreneurship.

91. In most of the countries surveyed, trainers' needs are met locally except when specific training skills are requested. These needs are filled by inviting experienced trainers from abroad - quite often from other national EMPRETEC programmes.

92. **Operational sustainability.** This heading covers accounting, financial, general and information management capacity. The terms of reference do not include an investigation of these issues. However, fieldwork did provide an opportunity to appreciate the operational sustainability of national programmes in one particular respect, namely the ability to develop and manage appropriate information systems concerning in particular Empretecos, consultants and other suppliers of services and trainers.

93. As was mentioned earlier, few programmes keep up-to-date files on Empretecos and other stakeholders. Only in one case was it possible to obtain satisfactory information on Empretecos, consultants and trainers. National programmes have managed on their own as best as they could but in most cases their management information system is not even up to minimal standards.

94. **Networking sustainability**. The issue is whether national programmes have been able to develop networks that are likely to survive in the future. Networks to be considered are primarily those between Empretecos, between Empretecos and other non-Empretec firms (including TNCs and large local firms), between Empretecos and financial institutions and between Empretecos and government agencies.

95. The data gathered on this question either in the field or through surveys has been limited due to the fact that few programmes manage to collect adequate information from Empretecos. The evidence that has been obtained for only three countries over the 1997-1999 period is inconclusive. Networks do not seem, however, to have expanded very much, in particular with respect to networking with foreign firms.

96. On a more holistic and impressionistic note, it is the evaluators' assessment that at least four programmes have built rather significant networks since their inception. One appears to be declining, and another one has remained small in scale but stable.

IV - Recommendations

97. While the evaluation team came to the conclusion that the programme should be reinforced, it also identified a number of points that need to be addressed in order to improve its effectiveness, and to meet more effectively the expectations of Empretecos, of national programme managers and of other stakeholders.

98. The evaluation team has chosen to focus on two issues of overwhelming strategic importance:

- substantive and operational sustainability;
- international networking.

Enhancing the substantive and operational sustainability of national programmes

99. Owing to the lack of adequate guidance for many years from headquarters, the programme has suffered from a slow process of erosion that undermines the quality of the preparation of Empretecos. The motivational seminar (Entrepreneurial Development Programme, EDP) needs to be updated. Technical training must be improved. New trainers need to be trained and certified; while older trainers are in need of retraining.

100. **It is therefore recommended that:**[13]

A. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should undertake a systematic review of EDP

101. Even if trainers feel that the EDP seminar still responds adequately to attitudinal problems faced by entrepreneurs, and that these problems have not changed over the last forty years, people in the field also feel that it should be improved and "modernised". This review should involve trainers from national programmes with a view to collecting inputs for the revision of the seminar. The idea of producing a second shorter EDP seminar, to be offered to Empretecos several years after attending the first EDP, should also be investigated. It should be noted that a second EDP would also give an opportunity to increase programme revenue, and to boost networking and the sharing of experiences between Empretecos.

B. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should make sure that the experience gained in EDP in the public sector is transferred to all interested national programmes

102. Some very creative experiments have been undertaken in the area of entrepreneurship and the public sector. They have proved to be very useful for public administrations and enterprises both to motivate public servants, and to prepare them to enter the private sector. The team has observed a convergence of national programme needs in this area. Knowledge gained in a country should be made available elsewhere.

C. With the assistance of national programmers, UNCTAD EMPRETEC should produce an inventory of all existing technical seminars

103. The objective here is to promote the transfer of specialised seminars that have been developed in some national programmes to other programmes facing similar demands. There is a need to create a roster of all technical seminars conducted in national programmes. This would allow countries wishing to introduce new technical seminars to take advantage of the expertise and programmes already available in other countries.

D. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should develop a standard Business Planning training package

104. Training in this area is generally lacking. Inadequate training in business planning leads to SME vulnerability, and contributes to a credibility gap with lending institutions and with some BDS experts. Business planning is such a fundamental component of the training of entrepreneurs that EMPRETEC should consider the development of a business planning package as one of the highest priority. There are plenty of packages available on the market (even accessible on the Net) or produced by other United Nations agencies. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should tap qualified external resources as well as any expertise readily available in national programmes.

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[13] The recommendations follow in a logical order that is not intended to imply any degree of relative importance.

E. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should urgently address the need to train new trainers and retrain older ones

105. It has been found in the course of the field mission that some national programmes are already short of competent trainers. Most trainers were trained many years ago, and many admit that their competencies have aged, and that they need to be retrained. EMPRETEC should set up a training/retraining programme relying on specialized expertise.

F. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should devise a compulsory system of certification for all trainers

106. There is no formal and official training procedure at present. Under these circumstances, there are limited opportunities for guaranteeing the quality of the trainers or for promoting their credibility with trainees and in comparison with other entrepreneurship programmes.

107. There is therefore a need to establish a formal and official training procedure capitalizing on the considerable value of a certification delivered by UNCTAD.

G. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should introduce a certification process for Empretecos

108. Certification would be granted only to candidates that have fulfilled admission and training requisites established by UNCTAD EMPRETEC. Certification bearing the UNCTAD logo would insure the quality of EMPRETEC training, and provide the basis for efficient networking between Empretecos.

H. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should make available to national programmes a unified software solution to Management Information System (MIS) needs that are not yet met

109. The evaluation team has had considerable difficulty in gathering even basic data from national programmes. Most country programmes do not keep systematic files on Empretecos and other clients, trainers, consultants or advisors. They have a hard time tracing individuals and producing up-to-date listings and basic statistics. A single solution should be proposed for national programmes. This should be user-friendly and acceptable to all such programmes. Attention should be paid to maintaining low set-up, operational and recurrent costs. The monitoring of the national information systems by UNCTAD EMPRETEC would also give headquarters an opportunity to reconstruct its own information system, which is now displaying major weaknesses.

Promoting international networking

110. All national programme members that were interviewed consider international networking the very area where UNCTAD EMPRETEC can best help them to fulfil their mission. The evaluation team agrees that it is indeed an area where UNCTAD EMPRETEC can make a major contribution, although the issue of substantive sustainability addressed above is more fundamental. The promotion of increased international networking should take place at three levels: that of Empretecos; that of trainers; and that of national programme managers.

111. **It is recommended that:**

I. UNCTAD EMPRETEC should set up and manage a web site open to all the international EMPRETEC community

112. Many Empretecos feel that they all share the same entrepreneurial values, terminology and training regardless of their nationality, and as a result that they are well prepared to do business together. They also share similar information needs on entrepreneurship, SME management and world trade developments. Such needs may be met more and more through electronic communication.

113. Such a web site should include:

(1) a business opportunity section listing business offers, and allowing Empretecos to enter into direct negotiations among themselves;

(2) an information section with references to publications of interest to Empretecos;

(3) a general news section informing Empretecos of activities undertaken by UNCTAD EMPRETEC and by national programmes.

J. Organization by UNCTAD EMPRETEC of yearly meeting of trainers

114. The fundamental objective of this meeting would be to provide individual trainers with an opportunity to benefit from the experiences of fellow trainers. Issues addressed at this meeting would be the identification of ways and means of meeting the evolving needs of trainers; the organization of training events open to all trainers; and the identification of trainers who could be used in other programmes as need arises. Each national programme should be represented by at least one trainer.

K. Organization by UNCTAD EMPRETEC of a yearly meeting of EMPRETEC national directors

115. The purpose of this meeting would be to contribute to the development of closer relations between national programme directors and the UNCTAD EMPRETEC team, and to the formulation of harmonised national and international expansion strategies. Other issues like the adoption of common services such as information and performance monitoring systems would be discussed at this meeting, as well as the promotion of common policies regarding issues such as admission and certification criteria. Such meetings have already taken place occasionally in the past. This practice should be institutionalized.

V – Concluding comments

116. The overall conclusion reached by the evaluation team is that the EMPRETEC concept remains valid, has demonstrated adaptability to diverse environments, and is in high demand in many parts of the world. It is served by a team at headquarters that is considered in the field to be competent and committed to the task. It is the view of the evaluation team that the programme should be maintained and more firmly supported institutionally in the future.

117. The evaluation team is well aware that the above recommendations involve a shift in focus for UNCTAD EMPRETEC from a primarily advisory to a much greater supervisory and leadership role. The evaluation team believes such a shift is needed in order to strengthen the programme, and that it will give UNCTAD EMPRETEC firmer control over programme delivery through a closer monitoring of training standards and greater international networking. All these activities require time and resources, and should be given priority in order to consolidate the programme as an essential step towards a more efficient delivery of its activities.

Appendix I- Terms of reference

In-depth evaluation of the EMPRETEC Programme

I. Background

1. EMPRETEC was established in 1988 to promote entrepreneurship, SME development and their linkages with foreign companies through a business support network. The network is a self-sustaining coalition of public officials, entrepreneurs, corporate managers, bankers and executives of transnational corporations. The goal is to offer SMEs the skills, technology, opportunities, training and information necessary to enable them to realize their objectives, expand their activities and establish productive and stable linkages with foreign companies. By strengthening national institutional capacities, EMPRETEC aims at developing a local entrepreneurial culture, the creation of new business ventures, and the growth and expansion of existing SMEs, which in turn would lead to the diversification of the national economy and the creation of employment opportunities.

2. The basic features of the Programme are: a procedure for identifying and selecting promising entrepreneurs; entrepreneurship training workshops; follow-up support to entrepreneurs to assist them in making their business plans operational; the setting up or mechanisms to assist entrepreneurs to define their needs, expand and internationalize their activities; establishment of an EMPRETEC information network which would provide entrepreneurs with access to international business databases; development of associations of EMPRETEC entrepreneurs to help in exchanging information on trade and business opportunities and promoting cross-border and regional joint ventures; self-sustainability of the national programme at the end of UNCTAD's four-year involvement.

3. The EMPRETEC Programme is implemented through: a) a professionally staffed Empretec National Centre (ENC) providing a range of demand-driven training and consulting services to a selected target group of entrepreneurs on a "fee for services" basis; b) an Advisory Board, composed of local public and private sector representatives, banks, and international partners establishing policy and overseeing the implementation of the project; and c) an Entrepreneur Association of participants in the programme to exchange experiences and actively pursue networking activities.

4. The Programme is now operational in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ghana, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. The Programme is at different levels of implementation in a further 25 countries from Africa, Central America and Eastern Europe.

II. Programme support

5. EMPRETEC's activities are coordinated at the international level by a small UNCTAD team that initiates and implements new country projects, monitors progress, and assists in ensuring high standards of project delivery. In particular, the coordinating team facilitates the exchange of *'best practices'* between the country projects, and identifies and

develops new modules to strengthen the services provided by the local Empretec National Centres. For the implementation of new projects UNCTAD draws upon the experience of highly qualified staff from more mature national projects to transfer methodologies and best practices to new countries.

III. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

6. The study will be a thematic one, focusing on the examination of the Programme in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, performance and impact in the context of its major objectives. The evaluation will be made available, as appropriate, to relevant UNCTAD intergovernmental bodies, in particular the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget. The evaluation should take account of the various independent, outside and in-house assessments undertaken by the Programme and/or its components over the past ten years and draw on their content and conclusions as appropriate.

IV. Issues to be covered

7. The in-depth evaluation, which will place particular emphasis on performance and impact, should:

(i) Consider whether the Programme concept and design were appropriate in the institutional and commercial environment existing at the time it was launched as well as in achieving its objectives; consider whether the overall programme concept has retained its validity in a rapidly changing economic, technological and socio-political context; consider the degree of the Programme's adaptation to the changing needs of the beneficiaries – with particular attention paid to the flexibility, adaptability and replicability of the concept and methodology -; identify factors which may have facilitated or impeded the achievements of these objectives;

(ii) Assess the Programme implementation; review the quantity and quality of the services provided and of the material produced; assess the Programme's place and relevance within the host country policy on SMEs; identify major shortcomings in the past and prospects for the future; record any significant lessons that can be drawn from the experience of various projects undertaken under the Programme;

(iii) Assess the Programme's comparative advantages; review Empretec's approach as well as its capacity to deliver, and compare to other national and international donor-supported SME programmes, particularly in the light of the findings of various international expert bodies (donor committee, expert group meetings, universities) as regards "best practice" standards for SME support (e.g. selectivity, fee for services, sustainability, private sector based, market oriented);

(iv) Examine the relationship between this Programme and other programmes within and outside the United Nations system; assess the collaboration between Empretec and the regional programmes (Enterprise Africa (20 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa), Mediterranean 2000 (10 countries in the Mediterranean and Horn of Africa), and Central American (six countries)) in the implementation of national projects; make recommendations for closer cooperation as appropriate;

(v) Study the results and impact of the Programme, taking into consideration the views of beneficiary entrepreneurs, business associations, banks, and government officials, as well as those of the donor community; record any significant lessons that can be drawn from the experience of the Programme and its results;

(vi) Be forward looking, and, on the basis of the lessons learned in particular on the issues identified above, make recommendations on the strategy and priorities of the Programme, so as to maximize the benefits for the end-users, the interface with other related programmes within and outside the United Nations system and the relationship with other activities within UNCTAD;

(vii) Assess the adequacy of utilization of the funds provided for the Programme; evaluate the capacity of the EMPRETEC team in delivering the programme (design, market, fund-raise, install and back-stop national and regional country programmes); make recommendations, as appropriate, with regard to future implementation of the Programme, including estimates of resource requirements.

The gender dimension will be taken into account whenever appropriate and possible.

8. The evaluation process will commence with the design of appropriate assessment tools for each activity that will benchmark actual performance against expected results. The evaluation will cover the activities of the programme from its inception.

IV. Evaluation team and reporting

9. The in-depth study will be conducted by an independent, outside evaluation team. The team will include a professional evaluator with extensive experience in this area. The team will be complemented by two additional members who will deal with specific tasks. The latter will be knowledgeable about the EMPRETEC programme, familiar with UNCTAD programmes and UNCTAD's programme, planning and assessment procedures, and be constantly involved in the work of UNCTAD intergovernmental bodies. At least one member should have working knowledge of Spanish. The study will draw on findings from evaluations/assessments conducted so far. The team will work under the methodological guidance of the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit (PPAU). Field missions will be organised as appropriate.

10. The evaluation should be completed by 31 May 2000, including the submission of the final evaluation report. The report should be within the space limit of a normal UNCTAD document (not more than 16 single-spaced pages), together with an annexe providing supplementary information.

11. The report of the team will be presented by the evaluation team to UNCTAD intergovernmental bodies, in particular the Working Party, as appropriate. PPAU will coordinate and present any comments the UNCTAD secretariat may wish to make on the report to the relevant UNCTAD intergovernmental bodies.

Appendix II - Methodology

1. Starting with the terms of reference, two priority tasks were undertaken:

- the selection of countries to be visited;
- the definition of the approach to be adopted in order to obtain the data required for each of the terms of reference in an efficient manner.

2. Countries to be visited were selected on the basis of the following criteria. They had to have been in operation for a sufficient period of time, that is at least five years. Both Africa and Latin America had to be equally represented in the sample. Programmes presumed to be more successful had to be included as well as those presumed to be less successful.

3. The number of countries visited was to be constrained by the fact that the evaluation took place during the UNCTAD X Conference in Bangkok, and also by the fact that a number of Latin American countries could not be visited at the end of February/beginning of March during their holiday season when the mission had to take place.

4. In the final analysis, five countries were visited: Zimbabwe and Ghana in Africa; Argentina, Chile and Uruguay in Latin America. These national programmes have been in operation since 1988 (Argentina), 1989 (Uruguay), 1990 (Chile, Ghana) and 1992 (Zimbabwe). All country programmes have therefore been in operation between seven and eleven years.

5. The approach adopted in order to obtain the information required by the terms of reference was the following. An ex-post Logical Framework Analysis (LAF) was produced under the guidance of the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit (PPAU). The terms of reference were translated into specific performance criteria fitting into the LAF. In this manner, it was made sure that none of the terms of reference would be omitted, and that research questions could be translated unambiguously into information needs.

6. The next step involved the production of a questionnaire to be sent to all country programmes, including those to be visited. An interview guide was found to be used in the field, taking into account the various stakeholders that were to be met (programme directors, trainers, advisors, Empretecos, board members, and local donor representatives).

7. The response rate was 62 per cent. All country programmes that were to be visited answered the questionnaire. All non-responding country programmes except one were either new programmes (less than five years old) or programmes that had been phased out. As a result, detailed data was gathered either through visits and/or through questionnaires for seven countries. The non-responding country that belonged to the population frame could not be visited, and did not respond to the questionnaire in spite of repeated invitations to do so.

8. Overall sample coverage estimates are 84 per cent on the basis of funding received and 76 per cent on the basis of number of Empretecos trained.

9. The evaluation team would like to thank all the national programme directors who answered the questionnaire, were willing to meet us, arranged for meetings with other

national EMPRETEC stakeholders, and made our mission an effective, convivial and most rewarding experience.

10. Other data collection activities included the review of available materials (project documents, training materials, evaluation reports, BDS-related studies), as well as meetings with UNCTAD EMPRETEC team members and with its director. Meetings and phone interviews took place with representatives of donor and recipient countries, and with other agencies or programmes providing BDS.

11. In many instances, the evaluation team addressed specific queries to UNCTAD EMPRETEC and to the Programme, Planning and Assessment Unit (PPAU) team members. They were always dealt with in the most efficient manner. The evaluation team wishes to express its gratitude to all of them, and in particular to the support staffs who helped considerably in the gathering of documents, the production of the questionnaire, the follow-up with country programmes and the intricate logistics of the evaluation.